United Nations S/2001/153

Security Council

Distr.: General
21 February 2001
English
Original: French

Letter dated 16 February 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement on the situation in southern Serbia issued on 15 February 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Pierre **Schori**
Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations

01-25886 (E) 210201 210201

Annex to the letter dated 16 February 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Sweden to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and French]

Statement on the situation in southern Serbia issued on 15 February 2001 by the Presidency of the European Union on behalf of the European Union

The European Union supports the initiative of the Belgrade authorities to find a peaceful and durable solution to the current situation in southern Serbia which risks destabilizing the region.

It welcomes the plan adopted by the Governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia on 8 February and presented by Serb Deputy Prime Minister Covic to the European Union Political and Security Committee today. The plan, which aims at giving a comprehensive response to the crisis, will serve as a good basis for further discussions. In the long term, the economic and social development of the region, the full integration of the Albanian community into political life and civil society, and respect for human rights and minorities in line with international standards are the only guarantee for stability in the area within a democratic Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. This political, economic and social approach corresponds to the spirit of the Zagreb Summit and the Stability Pact.

The success of this initiative depends primarily on the efforts of the parties concerned, but will require the support of the international community.

The European Union will support political, economic and social measures in favour of the local population while respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The European Commission and European Union member States have already committed well over 1 million euros for humanitarian and development projects (notably support for schools) in the Presevo region. The Commission has announced today an additional assistance of 900,000 euros to municipalities concerned.

At the start of the crisis the European Union, with the agreement of the Yugoslav leadership, sent European Union Monitor Mission observers to report on the development of the crisis as well as to contribute to early warning and confidence-building in the area in conformity with its mandate. A reinforcement of the personnel on the spot has been agreed.

The European Union looks forward to the Serb and Yugoslav authorities' implementing measures in favour of full integration of the Albanian community as soon as possible to build the necessary confidence.

The European Union expects the Albanian community in southern Serbia to designate representatives who can engage in a constructive dialogue with the Serb and Yugoslav authorities. This implies an immediate cessation of violence by the armed extremist Albanian groups notably in the ground safety zone (GSZ).

The European Union reiterates its condemnation of all acts of violence. It appeals to Kosovars with political authority to distance themselves clearly and publicly from the actions of armed extremist groups in southern Serbia.

The European Union emphasizes the importance of the continuing efforts of the Kosovo Force (KFOR), notably to ensure the effective control of the administrative boundary between Kosovo and Serbia.

The European Union is ready to work closely with the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Serbia with a view to examining further support aimed at contributing to a peaceful and sustainable solution in southern Serbia.